

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 02395

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO
SUBJECT: LOOKING TOWARD THE SUMMIT: NATO PULLS UP
ITS SOCKS

1. EARLY RETURNS FROM NATO'S FORCE GOAL REVIEW INDICATE A
REMARKABLE TURN-AROUND IN DEFENSE SPENDING PLANS: ALL
DPC ALLIES EXCEPT TWO (CA AND PO - NOT YET INSTRUCTED)
HAVE EITHER ALREADY INCORPORATED THE AIM OF 3 PERCENT REAL
ANNUAL INCREASE IN THEIR PROJECTED FINANCIAL PLANNING OR
TOLD US THEY INTEND TO DO SO FORMALLY DURING THEIR FORTH-
COMING MULTILATERALS. THIS IS IN CONTRAST TO THE 1976
REVIEW, WHEN ONLY TWO COUNTRIES (BE AND TU) PROJECTED
INCREASES AT OR ABOVE THE 3 PERCENT LEVEL.

2. THIS IS THE BEST INDICATION THAT WE HAVE HAD SO FAR
THAT THE ALLIES ARE PREPARING TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE LAID
DOWN BY THE NEW ADMINISTRATION LAST YEAR - THAT THE US WAS
WILLING TO DO ITS PART IN ENHANCING NATO'S DETERRENT
POSTURE IF THE ALLIES WERE WILLING TO DO THEIRS. THE
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ORCHESTRATED US EFFORT OVER THE PAST 15 MONTHS - STARTING
WITH VP MONDALE'S VISIT AND THE ADMINISTRATION'S REAFFIRM-
ATION OF NATO'S PRIORITY IN US POLICY - HAS BEGUN TO
ANIMATE THE TIES OF COMMON PURPOSE WITHIN THE ALLIANCE.
MINISTERIAL AGREEMENT ON THE AIM OF 3 PERCENT LAST SPRING,
A HALLMARK FOR ALLIANCE PLANNING, PROVIDED AN EXPLICIT
GOAL AND STANDARD AGAINST WHICH PERFORMANCE COULD BE

MEASURED; AND THE US FY-1979 DEFENSE BUDGET HAS GIVEN PROOF OF THE DEGREE OF US RESOLVE, WHILE ADDING DIRECT PRESSURE ON THE ALLIES TO TAKE COMMENSURATE STEPS. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RESPONSES THUS FAR TO THIS YEAR-LONG EFFORT, TO SUSTAINED PRODDING BY GENERAL HAIG, AND TO THE NEW US DEFENSE BUDGET ARE THE RECIPROCAL EFFORTS NOW BEING MADE BY ALLIES TO ADJUST THEIR FORWARD FINANCIAL PLANNING UPWARD.

3. THOUGH BUDGETARY PROJECTIONS CAN BE AS EPHEMERAL AS GOOD INTENTIONS, THEY ARE, NONETHELESS, THE NECESSARY FIRST STEPS TO ADDRESSING NATO'S COLLECTIVE DEFICIENCIES. THESE INCREASED BUDGETARY PROJECTIONS (PLUS THE FORCE GOALS BEING ACCEPTED) SHOULD PROVIDE NOT ONLY A BASIS FOR DEMONSTRATING NATO'S SOLIDARITY AND RESOLVE AT THE SUMMIT, BUT A FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK THAT SHOULD HELP FACILITATE CONSIDERATION OF SELECTED, HIGH PRIORITY LONG-TERM DEFENSE PROGRAM (LTDP) RECOMMENDATIONS NOW BEING CIRCULATED IN THE FINAL REPORTS OF THE LTDP TASK FORCES.

4. THIS IS NOT TO SUGGEST THAT ALL OF THESE PROJECTED INCREASES WILL NECESSARILY BE AVAILABLE FOR THE LTDP. THIS WILL VARY FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY, DEPENDING ON WHETHER THE INCREASES ARE AS YET TIED TO FIRM REQUIREMENTS AND HOW PRIORITY LTDP RECOMMENDATIONS STAND UP IN COMPETITION WITH COUNTRY PLANS. NATIONS WILL HAVE THEIR OWN

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PREFERRED WAYS OF SPENDING THESE INCREASES, AS WELL AS A PREFERENCE TO PROTECT PROGRAMS ALREADY IN COUNTRY PLANS, UNLESS A MORE COMPELLING CASE CAN BE MADE FOR RELEVANT LTDP RECOMMENDATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, WHATEVER DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY IS ULTIMATELY PROVIDED TO THE LTDP, MANY OF THE FORCE GOALS BEING ACCEPTED BY NATIONS ARE IN FACT LTDP RECOMMENDATIONS BY ANOTHER NAME, OR COMPATIBLE ENOUGH TO PROVIDE A CHAPEAU FOR RELATED LTDP ELEMENTS. THIS SHOULD ALSO HELP FACILITATE WIDESPREAD LTDP PARTICIPATION.

5. THERE IS OF COURSE MUCH TO BE DONE BETWEEN NOW AND THE SUMMIT TO HAMMER OUT AGREEMENT ON HIGH PRIORITY LTDP ACTION PROGRAMS. BUT THE ALLIES, LOOKING AHEAD TO THE SUMMIT, ARE PREPARING THEIR WAY BY ADJUSTING FORWARD PLANNING TO CONFORM WITH THE MINISTERIAL AIM OF 3 PERCENT. BENNETT

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